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How residents can efficiently manage their training years with myAIM

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POSTGRADUATE TRAINING

How residents can efficiently manage their training years with myAIM

18.12.2016

In June 2016, a new website for medical residents giving information, resources and support, and called NEJM Resident 360, was announced. It aims to provide the next generation of physicians with better tools to efficiently manage their training years [1]. The programme connects residents to a supportive community of fellow residents and is described as one easy-to-use platform developed by the NEJM Group for US medical residents [2].

In Switzerland, a similar programme called myAIM was developed in 2015 to facilitate residency in general internal medicine [3]. Its history and characteristics share many of the features of NEJM Resident 360, but merit a closer look to learn why such programmes are indispensable in training residents to become the next generation of physicians.

In 2011, Switzerland reformed its residency programme to combine two

specialties in one: primary care and general internal medicine. In line with this reformation, the Internal Medicine Certification Examination and Continuing Medical Education were also combined. In late 2015, as a final step, the respective professional societies formed the new Swiss Society of General Internal Medicine – the new professional and academic home of the majority of Swiss physicians (>8000 general internists and primary care physicians).

This development was enthusiastically supported by two Swiss organizations: Young General Practitioners (JHaS) and Swiss Young Internists (SYI). Initially, JHaS and SYI were both worried that medicine as a discipline is getting more and more fragmented into subspecialisations, which is accompanied by an increase in requirements for their own residency programme. Whereas patients faced more specialisation, residents faced an increased workload to get their residency organised and efficiently managed. They also observed that, although residency should take a maximum of 5 years, the mean duration of residency in the last decade was >8 years, according to the Swiss Institute of Medical Education (SIWF), which is responsible for assessment of residencies. JHaS and SYI hypothesised that helping residents to efficiently manage residency is a next step to decrease the duration of residency and, therefore, help to diminish the growing shortage of primary care physicians and general internists in Switzerland.

JHaS and SYI approached their societies and finally convinced them and 11 other medical associations to support their plan to construct a new website that connects all information needed to successfully complete residency in general internal medicine. The website was named myAIM, an acronym for “my General Internal Medicine” in German as well as a promise to not let the resident lose his/her aim of becoming a general internist. The Federal Office of Public Health funded the start of myAIM along with the new Swiss Society of General Internal Medicine. An editorial team of young and recently board-certified general internists and primary care physicians took the lead in organising the content of myAIM. The decision to allow fellow colleagues to construct the content of the new website was essential for myAIM and resulted in clear and attractive short articles that are appealing to residents.

The myAIM programme covers several aspects of improving residency (fig. 1). “Basic” is about the residency programme itself and provides hints how to tackle challenges in residencies such as working part-time or organising

mandatory courses in order to complete residency. “Career” shows ways to develop a career in general internal medicine by use of testimonials by fellow colleagues that accomplished, for example, a career as a primary care physician. “Science” helps colleagues to find help in starting an academic career or in accessing awarded research projects they could use for their next journal club. “Events” provides a database of upcoming events with the possibility to subscribe to automatic reminders for regional upcoming events. Finally, and possibly most importantly, myAIM displays all recent job offers in general internal medicine and uses social media to disseminate new job offers and other developments of myAIM.



Figure 1

myAIM covers basics, career, science and events for residents in general internal medicine.

The website is available in German, French and Italian, and was launched in May 2015. To promote the launch, several articles appeared in five Swiss medical journals and the editorial team organised presentations at

eight national congresses. In its first year, >6000 individuals visited myAIM, a number that is even higher than the estimated target population of all residents in general internal medicine (approximately 2500). The section with basic information about residency and the careers section are the most visited parts of myAIM. Among the specific contents, users appreciate the frequently asked questions section and the checklist for successfully completing residency. In contrast to NEJM Resident 360, myAIM has an open access policy without the requirement to register. However, users are invited to register in order to unlock further possibilities, such as subscription to personalised content, and to upload events themselves. Also, myAIM does not cover medical knowledge, unlike NEJM Rotation Prep. When myAIM was planned, stakeholder interviews with medical associations were conducted and the internet was searched for similar programmes. NEJM Resident 360 did not exist that time. However, both programmes can learn from each other about how to help young doctors surviving residency, even though local requirements and training cultures are different. We aim for the same: to help residents manage their training years in order to efficiently train a new generation of physicians.

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